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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 000021

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: UGANDA: UK CONSIDERING CORRUPTION TRAVEL BANS

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02 KAMPALA 01365

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REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Summary: The U.K. is considering visa restrictions for senior Ugandan officials guilty of misusing \$27 million allocated to the November 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala. The British say their primary target is Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa, that recent visa bans in Kenya provide a model for similar sanctions in Uganda, and that the U.K. will likely ask for U.S. support once the British have completed their review of CHOGM expenditures. At least a dozen government ministries and several Ministers - including Kutesa, Vice President Gilbert Bukenya, and Public Works Minister John Nasasira - have been implicated in the CHOGM scandal. We regard Kutesa's corruption as egregious, but believe Security Minister Amama Mbabazi's continued misappropriation of public funds for personal gain will have a greater adverse impact on U.S. national interests in Uganda. End Summary.

British Moving Toward Visa Restrictions

12. (C) A British High Commission official and the Department for International Development (DIFD) Uganda's Senior Governance Advisor told PolOff on January 7 that the U.K. is seriously considering visa restrictions for Ugandan officials guilty of embezzling CHOGM-related funds. The British said the ongoing inquiry by Uganda's Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) into CHOGM expenditures (ref. A) confirmed publicly what the British have known about CHOGM and Foreign Minister Kutesa since 2007. The British said senior DIFD officials in London are lobbying for visa sanctions, and that visa restrictions recently imposed on corrupt Kenyan officials provide a model for Uganda.

13. (C) This confirms recent statements made to PolOff by two well-connected Ugandans: Andrew Mwenda, the editor of the local news magazine The Independent; and Uganda's former interim Ambassador to the UN, Adonia Ayebare. In December, Mwenda said the British are deeply angered by the CHOGM scandal and that a senior DIFD official based in London told him the U.K. is considering visa restrictions. On January 7, Ayebare told PolOff that he too has heard from senior London-based DIFD contacts that the British are moving toward cancelling visas for Kutesa and Vice President Bukenya. Ayebare added that President Museveni is aware of these

discussions within the British government, and that both Museveni and his son, Lt. Col. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, who is married to Kutesa's daughter, are concerned about the implications for Kutesa but less so for Vice President Bukenya.

Comment: Holding the Corrupt Accountable

14. (C) Uganda's CHOGM debacle is a major embarrassment for the British Commonwealth. Foreign Minister Kutesa has a history of corruption stemming back to his 1999 censure by Parliament for abuse of office while serving as State Minister of Finance. In both the 1999 scandal and CHOGM, Kutesa allegedly influenced government contracts for personal gain. A corruption scandal many times larger than CHOGM, however, is brewing in Uganda's oil sector with reports that Security Minister and National Resistance Movement (NRM) Secretary General Amama Mbabazi is positioning himself for a massive kickback in return for facilitating an agreement between

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Italian oil giant ENI and Heritage Oil (ref. B). Mbabazi also has a reputation for abuse of office. In 2008, he was embroiled in a \$5-7 million land scandal (ref. C) that continues to have political reverberations (ref. D), and in 2002 the Ugandan High Court found Mbabazi guilty of election-related offenses involving violence, intimidation, bribery and wrongful use of public resources (ref. E). Kutesa and Mbabazi's misappropriation of public funds and interference with public processes continue to adversely affect the stability of Uganda's nascent democratic institutions.
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